

Race and Inclusion in South African Education

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1 Introduction

This article draws upon and applies the 'concept paper' (Sayed 2002) within the DFID project 'Learning about inclusion and exclusion in education: policy and implementation in India and South Africa'. In this concept paper, several approaches to understanding and using the concepts of inclusion/exclusion are made. Such assumptions and approaches inform this article too, and it is important to spell out explicitly what these are at the beginning. Inclusion/exclusion are understood herein:

1. To mean that questions of inclusion cannot be addressed adequately without taking into account issues of exclusion. As such, inclusion and exclusion are conjoined, theoretically and empirically. All processes of inclusion entail exclusion and vice versa.
2. Inclusion here is not understood educationally to refer to people with 'special needs', neither is it about assimilating people in an existing order nor to reproduce a status quo based on inequalities and discrimination. To quote Barton on this:

Inclusive education is not integration and is not concerned with the assimilation or accommodation of discriminated groups or individuals within existing socio-economic conditions and relations. It is not about making people as 'normal' as possible. Nor is it about the well-being of a particular oppressed or excluded group. Thus, the concerns go well beyond those of disablement. Inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end – the creation and maintenance of an inclusive society. As such, the interest is with all citizens, their well-being and security. This is a radical conception.... It is ultimately about the transformation of a society and its formal institutional arrangements, such as education. This means change in the values, priorities and policies that support and perpetuate practices of exclusion and discrimination (Barton 1999: 58).

3. Forms of oppression are viewed as intersecting with each other in 'non-synchronous' and 'interlocking' ways. This means that forms of

inequalities and experiences of discrimination need to be viewed relationally as complex and textured, allowing for an holistic appraisal of social processes and people's experiences and identities. However, while non-synchronous, such intersecting forces in their configuration develop a 'dominant articulating principle', which Laclau and Mouffe, cited in McCarthy (1997), describe:

A 'dominant' character refers to the relations along which 'endogenous differences' in the school are principally articulated. These dominant relations thus constitute an 'articulating principle' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) pulling the entire ensemble of relations in the school setting into a 'unity' or focus for conflict. Such an articulating principle may be race, class, or gender (McCarthy 1997: 549).

4. Schools are viewed as sites of struggle. They simultaneously 'reproduce' (Giroux and Aronowitz 1986) social inequalities and offer possibilities for critically questioning, opposing and challenging social structures and orders (Nkomo 1990).
5. Policy is understood both 'as text' and 'as discourse'. This entails viewing policies as outcomes of contestation and compromise and as having significant practical consequences.
6. Inclusion/exclusion policies need to be holistic, implementable, with clear programmatic actions and time-frames that incorporate the dimensions of ethics and rights, efficacy, the political and pragmatic.
7. In the context of schooling, educational policies need to address concerns about access into schools, school governance, developing a culture of teaching and learning, inclusive curricula and promoting an ethos of inclusion based on human rights and democracy.

This article uses the concepts of inclusion/exclusion with these understandings and applies them to the South African educational context. It is also a way of enfleshing the implications of applying the concepts of inclusion/exclusion in the South.

2 Inclusion and exclusion under apartheid

Apartheid is known for having been a system based on white supremacy, racism and the oppression of the majority of 'black' South Africans. Being based on the philosophy of white supremacy and justified ideologically through Afrikaner Calvinism and racist (pseudo) scientific discourses, apartheid ensured the abject segregation of people defined racially by the apartheid regime. This segregation included separate and unequal provision of housing, schooling, social amenities and economic and political oppression and exploitation of the majority of 'black' South Africans. As such, 'black' South Africans were for all intents and purposes excluded from the 'mainstream' of South African society: included in disenfranchised, disadvantaged and colonised groupings, and excluded from socio-economic and political positions of power. Three points need to be made about the apartheid situation in relation to the concepts of inclusion/exclusion.

As the above brief and overall description of apartheid indicates, while apartheid excluded 'black' people from the 'mainstream' of apartheid society, it simultaneously constructed marginalised, excluded spaces within which 'black' people lived their lives. As much as apartheid excluded 'black' people it constructed the material conditions for their exclusion in visibly demarcated spaces, the most blatant of which were 'group areas'. In addition, the establishment of 'white' privilege consistently necessitated the simultaneous construction of 'black' under-privilege. Inclusion/exclusion have been framed and experienced historically as linked inextricably with each other.

Furthermore, all critiques of apartheid, within the anti-apartheid movement, have pointed to the inclusionary and exclusionary effects and intents of apartheid. In such critiques, several trends emerged. Some critiques pointed to the injustices of racism (Tutu 1986), others to the nexus between 'race' and class in the development of apartheid capitalism (Wolpe 1989), and others to the inter-relations between 'race' and gender (Cock 1980), 'race', class and gender (Cock 1980) or regional location, gender, 'race' and class (Bozzoli 1991). In these ways, such critiques of apartheid also implied that racism could not be understood on its own, but needed to be seen as 'interlocking' with 'other'

forms of oppression and exploitation. 'Race', however, remained the 'dominant articulating principle' within apartheid constructions and anti-apartheid struggles (Patel 1989).

While the concept of 'inclusion' has been used in the context of 'special education' under apartheid (NDoE 1997), the general educational usage of inclusion in the South African educational context has been to argue for the inclusion of the majority of 'black' South Africans, including disabled people, in equitable provisions within a non-racial and democratic educational system. The issue has not been only about 'special education' needs, to quote Barton on this again:

Thus, the concerns go well beyond those of disablement. Inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end – the creation and maintenance of an inclusive society. As such, the interest is with all citizens, their well-being and security. This is a radical conception.... It is ultimately about the transformation of a society and its formal institutional arrangements, such as education. This means change in the values, priorities and policies that support and perpetuate practices of exclusion and discrimination (Barton 1999: 58).

A demonstration of this was the June 1976 Soweto Uprisings, which not only opposed the imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, but also called for the abolition of apartheid and apartheid education (see Christie 1986; Kallaway 1986 and Nkomo 1990). This then characterised all anti-apartheid educational struggles particularly through the 1980s. Oppositions to apartheid education, then, went beyond 'special needs' in education and called for 'a transformation of society'.

Exclusion and inclusion were, thus, not only viewed as linked to each other, but also as necessitating an analysis of apartheid society that would show the inter-relations between various forms of oppression and exploitation under apartheid.

3 Inclusion and exclusion in post-apartheid South Africa

As the above discussion indicates, inclusion and exclusion under apartheid are best understood as

mechanisms within the construction of exclusionary, racist patterns of domination and privilege, and anti-colonial, 'critical struggles' (Carrim and Sayed 1992) of the anti-apartheid movement. In this regard, it could be argued that the post-apartheid South African scenario is one that attempts to redefine the exclusionary constructions of apartheid and to reconfigure these in ways that are more inclusionary of all the people of South Africa. The Preamble of the Constitution of the 'new' South Africa states the following:

We, the people of South Africa,

- Recognise the injustices of our past;
- Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
- Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
- Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
- We, therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to:
 - Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
 - Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law;
 - Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
 - Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

(Preamble of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* 1996: 1)

Inclusion and exclusion in the post-apartheid situation is one that speaks directly to the apartheid past. In the 'new' South Africa, South Africa not only 'belongs to all those who live in it', it is also one that is based on 'the foundations of a democratic and open (read inclusive) society', 'social justice and fundamental human rights'. The comprehensive inclusion adopted in the Preamble of the Constitution is later reinforced substantially in the Equality Clause of the Constitution. It states:

1. Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

2. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.
3. The state may not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
4. No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.
5. Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

(*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* 1996, Section 9, Chapter 2)

Sections (3), (2) and (4) of this clause are most important. Section (3) recognises 16 different forms of identities, and the 'new' South Africa intends to 'include' them all constitutionally in the workings of South African society. In this regard, people cannot be 'excluded' on any of these terms, and all people, with all the identities specified, are to be 'included'. Note, however, that those who are to be included and who cannot be excluded, include, but go beyond, disabled people and those defined in terms of 'race', class or gender – the 'famous three' (cf. Soudien 1998a).

Sections (2) and (4) are significant because they allow the 'new' South African government to enact such measures that would initiate, facilitate (incorporating the passing of legislation) and develop the inclusion of different groups of South Africans in South African society. In this regard it is worth pointing to the Employment Equity Act of 1998, which sets out to do this in relation to the economy and in respect to 'black' and disabled people and women.

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 may be viewed as an instance of 'preferential treatment'

(Gilligan 1994) or 'affirmative action' (Henrard 1996). Following the constitutional stipulation to 'redress the imbalances of the past', the Employment Equity Act of 1998 attempts to 'redress' access to the economy, of people that were most discriminated against and who were excluded from meaningful participation within the economy. These have been identified within the Employment Equity Act of 1998 as mainly those who are 'black', women and disabled people. In terms of this Act, economic organisations and/or institutions need to achieve a 'balance in numbers' of those who are employed with them, in terms of the overall profile of their organisations and particularly in terms of the composition of their management structures. 'Black' and disabled people and women need to be represented and participate on all levels of the organisation. Capacity development and support programmes are also indicated in the Act, and point to the importance of economic organisations to develop plans for the long-term sustainability of ensuring such representation and participation of South Africans in the future. Although this Act privileges 'race', disability and gender in its 'preferential treatment' of South Africans, it does signal a political will on the part of the South African government to embark on policies and pass legislation that would facilitate 'inclusion' and reduce instances of 'exclusion'.

The Employment Equity Act, however, circumscribes its stipulations for inclusion to those who are 'black' disabled or women. Indeed, 'class', part of the 'famous three', is not mentioned. Other identities such as those tied to 'language', 'sexual orientation' and 'religion' do not receive specific attention within it. Thus, while the Act is phrased in ways that are supposed to be consistent with the Constitution, it limits the comprehensive inclusion of the Constitution to 'race', gender and ability, and can, because of this, be seen to exclude, while it attempts to be inclusionary.

In light of the above, it would be fair to state that inclusion and exclusion in South Africa have been historically, and currently, conjoined. They have not been restricted in their use to refer to people with disabilities. They have been incorporated and redefined within, first, an anti-apartheid struggle and, second, as a part of the project of nation-building.

Educational policies and legislation may be argued to be antiracist and inclusionary in their frames (Carrim 1998; Carrim *et al.* 2000). Looking at the National Education Policy Act (NEP Act) of 1996, the South African Schools Act (SAS Act) of 1996 and Curriculum 2005 (C2005), and its revised version in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2002a, there are discernible attempts to operationalise the comprehensive inclusivity contained in the Constitution of the 'new' South Africa.

The NEP Act of 1996 outlines, in broad terms, the democratisation and framework of the 'new' South African education and training system. It operationalises Constitutional provisions by endorsing the de-racialising of South African education and training, upholding human rights in the terms of the Equality clause of the Constitution and providing a framework that promotes a culture of human rights and inclusivity. The NEP Act of 1996 defines South African education as one that integrates education and training, promotes learner-centredness and an outcomes-based education, establishes a curriculum that is inclusivist, and democratic arrangements for teaching and learning and school governance (NDoE 1996a).

The SAS Act of 1996 democratises school governance in particular. It provides for principals, teachers, learners, parents and other members of the school community, such as non-academic staff in schools, to be jointly participant in making decisions of and for their schools (NDoE 1996b).

C2005, later revised and 'strengthened and streamlined' in the NCS in 2002, allows for eight learning areas which need to promote actively the development of critical thinking. It also emphasises a learner-centred approach, which would recognise the situated knowledges of learners and their prior learning, link content to the experiences of learners and allow for independent inquiry. In this approach to the curriculum, values of human rights, social justice and inclusivity are central. Particularly in relation to the NCS, the national department of education, has, in parallel, also established a 'democracy and values in education' project, the

purpose of which is to infuse values and human rights, in inclusivist ways, throughout the curriculum, provide teacher development and support, as well as initiate programmes that would complement interventions in schools (NDoE 1996, 2002b).

It would be, therefore, fair to state that at the level of policy and legislation inclusion plays a critical role in framing the nature of education and training in South Africa. While the 'dominant articulating principle' in these tend to be that of 'race', there is an attempt to keep these provisions in keeping with the comprehensive inclusion of the Constitution. These policies and legislations privilege 'race' most of the time, but they also link up with gender considerations (NEP Act), stakeholder groupings (SAS Act), respect for difference (C2005 and NCS) and a culture based on human rights. Thus, while 'inclusion' does inform such legislation and policies, it means different things at different educational moments and contexts.

Also of significance is the recently released White Article on Special Needs Education (NDoE 2002b). Drawing on a Report on Special Needs Education released in 1997, the White Article puts forward the idea of 'barriers to learning' in its definition of those in need of special educational attention. The importance of the idea of 'barriers to learning' is that it expands the category of those in need of special educational attention to include those who may not be disabled. People who are victims of violence, rape, or those who may be HIV+ or with AIDS, those who are in need of academic support, or those who are emotionally fragile for whatever reason would be considered as being in need of special educational attention, since their personal conditions give rise to difficulties in performing adequately in schools. They, thus, all experience 'barriers to learning' and warrant special educational attention.

This approach to special educational provision, through the lens of 'barriers to learning', not only expands the category of those in need of special educational attention, but also attempts to mainstream the provision of education and training of disabled people. It also ensures that the education of disabled people is conceptualised inclusively with the education of 'other' people in society. Again, then, through the *White Article* on

Special Educational Needs the approach is to use inclusion in broad terms, and to reconfigure the exclusionary effects caused by apartheid.

5 Emerging trends

Although it would be fair to state that South African education and training legislation and policies promote an expanded and rich use of the notion of inclusion, it cannot be assumed that this is reflective of current, and emerging, practices. Instead, mounting evidence seems to suggest that various forms of exclusion still prevail throughout the system. The following discusses some of these emerging experiences in practice.

The 'dominant articulating principle' in all of South African legislation and policies is that of 'race'. The laws and policies are explicitly antiracist (Carrim 1998) and 'redressing' the racisms of apartheid is of central importance. However, experiences of desegregating schools in South Africa point to ongoing forms of racism. Desegregated schools in South Africa:

- have high incidences of racial tension and racist experience (Vally and Dalambo 1999);
- promote an assimilation of 'black' students into a 'white' ethos (Carrim 1992, 1995; Carrim and Soudien 1999);
- do not include the use of African languages (Jansen 1998b; Soudien 1998b);
- do not necessarily have inclusive curricula (Carrim 1995);
- do not always have 'black' representation on all levels of the school, particularly in terms of staff composition and school governing bodies (Vally and Dalambo 1999).

Thus, while educational legislation and policies are antiracist, experiences of racism in South African schools continue.

In 1997, the Gender Equity Task Team released a report that indicated that schools are unsafe spaces for girls (NDoE 1997). Current South African educational policies and legislation are emphatically

antisexist, but schools remain unsafe spaces for girls. In this instance, the shockingly high rate of rape in South Africa points to not only schools being unsafe spaces for girls, but the general fabric of South African society being unsafe for females. Thus, even in terms of gender inclusion is not what characterises people's actual experiences.

Research and commentaries on school governance in South Africa also indicate that:

- There is inadequate representation of 'black' and disabled people, women and the working class on school governing bodies (Carrim and Sayed 1997, 1998).
- Even when representation of marginalised groups does exist, such people in practice remain silenced on school governing bodies and their participation is minimal, or worse reinforce stereotypes and forms of exclusion (Dielten and Enslin 2002).
- Language continues to have exclusionary effects on school governing bodies, reducing the participation levels of those whose language is not English or Afrikaans (Vally 2000; Carrim and Tshoane 2000).

Another example of the mismatch between policy and practice is in relation to C2005 and the NCS. While C2005 and the NCS are inclusive in intent and purpose, in practice teachers do not have support to develop their skills to teach or prepare materials in inclusive ways. Learning support materials are insufficient or non-existent. Training in C2005 and the NCS have been inadequate and problematic (Jansen 1998a; NDoE 2000). Thus, also at the level of the curriculum, while educational laws and policies are based foundationally on inclusivity, they are not matched with what exists in practice.

Given such a high degree of discrepancy between laws and policies and actual experience, it would be reasonable to state that South African laws and policies lack on the level of being pragmatic. They are laudable on the dimensions of the moral and ethical and the political, but they have not as yet proven to be efficient and pragmatically implementable (cf. Sayed 2002).

6 Are the concepts of inclusion / exclusion significant for the South?

Given the above accounts of inclusion/exclusion under apartheid and the 'new' South Africa, as well as the exposition of current South African laws and policies and some emergent experiences, it is now possible to assess the value of the concepts of inclusion/exclusion for the South, using South Africa as an example. It seems that:

1. Experiences of exclusion, and the correlative demand for inclusion, have been characteristic of anti-colonial, anti-apartheid struggles. The concepts of inclusion/exclusion, therefore, are not new to the South.
2. Historically, understandings of the forms and mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion have developed theoretically. These have pointed to the links between different forms of oppression and the various intersecting ways in which mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion work in practice.
3. Current approaches to laws and policies are informed by concerns of inclusion and to erode the exclusions caused by colonial, apartheid constructions. While these may lack on the levels of efficiency and being pragmatic, they are unambiguous on the levels of the moral, ethical and political.
4. Methodologically, research into the practical effects of state constructions, such as laws and policies, have been able to point to who or what is included/excluded, why and how. These have done so without the use of inclusion/exclusion as conceptual categories, and have tended to use theories of social categories, such as 'race', class, gender and disability, as their framework for research. In this regard, inclusion/exclusion may provide a

useful language of description, but does not offer much that is substantially different methodologically or theoretically.

It seems, therefore, that the concepts of inclusion/exclusion may reinforce existing work in the South. They do not offer anything 'new'. They offer the potential to highlight the practical and pragmatic in realising the aims of social justice and inclusion in practice. They also allow for noting the interconnections between forms of inclusion/exclusion, and this has the important possibility of enabling 'joined up' (Sayed 2002) policy formulation and implementation. In these ways, the concepts of inclusion/exclusion are useful to the South in so far as they reinforce what is being done and connecting such work in conversation with the North, from which both the South and North can only benefit.

7 Conclusion

This article has argued that inclusion/exclusion have been concepts implicitly at work throughout apartheid and the anti-apartheid struggles. It has also shown that, due to historical experiences of domination and exclusion, current attempts at nation-building are premised foundationally on a comprehensive and expanded notion of inclusion. South African educational laws and policies are consistent with these. However, it has also been pointed out that while this may be the case in policies and laws, it is not necessarily the case of what pertains in actual practice. The disjunctures between policies and practice abound and the challenge is to operationalise such policies so that they are efficient and pragmatic. In this light, it was suggested that the concepts of inclusion/exclusion reinforce existing attempts to achieve social justice and inclusion, and are potentially useful particularly in facilitating South-North exchanges, but they are by no means 'new' to the South.

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